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After All, Where Did Dulles Get His Facts?

A number of people are going to have to be pardoned if they don't go quite all the way with Secretary Dulles in his contention that the Russian economy is on the point of "collapsing." Memory is long enough for these people that they recall the report on the Central Intelligence Agency—Brother Allen's domain—which indicated some serious lapses on the information this country is getting, particularly from behind the iron curtain. As of now, these people would be much more inclined to agree with the secretary if they knew his information came from, let us say, Great Britain.

It would be nice to be able to believe that the Russian economy is so seriously undermined that the Soviet Union must now see some slowing down of the cold war pace. That would help explain a number of things about the recently observed change of approach of the Soviet leaders. The only trouble is that these same things can also be explained by other means. For instance, who knows what Soviet Russia just doesn't want to risk mounting tensions?

There are signs the Russian economy is under terrific strains. There are other signs of interest, too, such as the parade of new military aircraft only a few days ago that is the sort of thing a nation might do when it wanted to be convincing but didn't have real strength. This country apparently has no complete information as to how deep the Soviet air strength really goes; the show a few days ago could have shown about everything Russia has.

But there are other signs, too, that balance the first. For one, Russian agricultural production is apparently headed for great new peaks; if that is true, the back of the Russian grain shortage will be broken.

Much of the appraisal of the Russian economy must be based on where the secretary's information came from. If from Britain, maybe o. k. If from Brother Allen's C. I. A., well, maybe not. The report may go to Mr. Dulles, would like a little more evidence.

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